

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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USIA-06 MC-02 TRSE-00 SAB-01 SAM-01 IO-11 ACDA-05

SAJ-01 /093 W

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R 090725Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5843

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMCONSUL ZAGREB

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 1502

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR YO PN CB US

SUBJ: MEETING WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY BERNARDIC

REF: A. STATE 54329 B. STATE 54860 C. BELGRADE 1499

1. I MET WITH ASSISTANT FEDERAL SECRETARY FOR WESTERN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA DRAGAN BERNARDIC ON MAR 8 TO DISCUSS PANAMA CANAL NEGOTIATIONS AND ALLEGED CAMBODIAN BOMBING RAID IN ACCORDANCE WITH REFTELS A AND B AND MY RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH AMBASSADOR BUNKER.

2. PANAMA. BERNARDIC IS GLAD TO HEAR THAT WE ARE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF NEGOTIATIONS. HE SAID THAT TITO WILL ENDORSE THE PANAMANIAN POSITION AS THE GOY ALWAYS HAS, BUT STRESSED THAT THERE IS "NO PROBLEM" AND NO NEED FOR ANY WORRY ON OUR PART. HE IMPLIED UNDERSTANDING OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SITUATION.

3. CAMBODIA. REGARDING ALLEGED BOMBING, I EMPHASIZED THAT THE UNITED STATES PLAYED NO PART IN THE INCIDENT AND
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EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT FSFA SPOKESMAN WOULD DIGNIFY THE

CAMBODIAN CHARGES BY MAKING OFFICIAL STATEMENT ABOUT THEM AT PRESS CONFERENCE (REFTEL C). I SAID WE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED THAT THE GOY RESPECT OUR PREVIOUS PUBLIC DENIAL OF ANY INVOLVEMENT. BERNARDIC SAID THAT HE HAD NOT READ THE STATEMENT MADE BY THE FSFA PRESS SPOKESMAN, AND THAT HE WILL LOOK INTO THE MATTER.

4. IN THIS FIRST MEETING BETWEEN US, BERNARDIC PLEDGED TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT OUR COUNTRIES HAVE DIFFERENT IDEOLOGIES AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS, HE SAID THAT THERE ARE MANY AREAS IN WHICH WE CAN COOPERATE. HE URGED "ELIMINATING SOME MINOR DETAILS" AND FOCUSING OUR EFFORTS ON BIG ISSUES. HE SAID THAT THE GOY CONSIDERS THE U.S. A FRIENDLY COUNTRY: "WE HAVE DIFFERENCES, BUT THEN WE HAVE DIFFERENCES WITH EVERYONE."

5. I ACCEPTED WHOLEHEARTEDLY BERNARDIC'S OFFER OF PARTNERSHIP IN WORKING TO ENHANCE RELATIONS. I AGREED THAT WE MUST KEEP SMALL ISSUES FROM BECOMING BIG ISSUES, BUT POINTED OUT THAT PERCEPTIONS CAN DIFFER ABOUT WHETHER A GIVEN ISSUE IS BIG OR SMALL.

6. BERNARDIC EXPANDED ON THE DUTIES OF HIS NEWLY CREATED POSITION. HE WILL PROBABLY BE GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR JAPAN, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND IN ADDITION TO NORTH AMERICA AND WESTERN EUROPE. "ALL THE RICH COUNTRIES," AS HE PUT IT. FOR REASONS WHICH REMAIN UNCLEAR, HIS PORTFOLIO ALSO INCLUDES THE WARSAW PACT AND CEMA, EVEN THOUGH ASSISTANT SECRETARY MILICEVIC HAS RETAINED RESPONSIBILITY FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH EASTERN EUROPE AND NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. SILBERMAN

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